

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01496 071137Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AGR-05 AID-05 /062 W

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R 071005Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3035

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1496

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ECON ET

SUBJ: FORTHCOMING PRONOUNCEMENT ON LAND REFORM

1. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG
HERALDED BASIC DECISION ON LAND REFORM WILL BE ANNOUNCED
WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK. THE NATURE OF THE DECISION IS
LIKELY TO BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE, AS IMPARTIAL
OBSERVERS ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY PREDICT SOLID OPPOSITION
FROM THE ETHIOPIAN PEASANTRY, OR CIVIL WAR, IF THE GOVERN-
MENT ANNOUNCES THAT ALL AGRICULTURAL LAND HENCEFORTH
BELONGS TO THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE PEASANTRY PERMITTED
USUFRUCT ONLY. ALMOST ALL REPORTS WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING
IN RECENT WEEKS CONTEND NEVERTHELESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S
DECISION WILL BE THIS VERY RADICAL ONE.

2. THE NEW ROMANIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES TOLD ME THIS
MORNING, HOWEVER, THAT THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM
YESTERDAY THAT THE FORTHCOMING GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT
WILL NOT DISTURB THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND BY THE
PEASANTS. WE BELIEVE HE IS MISTAKEN REGARDING THE EPMG'S PRESENT
INTENTION, BUT WE STILL DO NOT RULE OUT A LAST MINUTE
RETREAT FROM THE PRECIPICE.
WYMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, LAND REFORMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS01496
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750045-0587
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750264/aaaacfnk.tel
Line Count: 51
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 1
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORTHCOMING PRONOUNCEMENT ON LAND REFORM
TAGS: PINS, ECON, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006